

Medical Ethics (Phil 218)

Ben Sarbey

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Fall 2022

Meeting Time: Wed/Fri 1:45-3:00 Crowell Building 106

Description: This course will explore classic and contemporary disputes in medical ethics. We will examine ethical issues in the doctor-patient relationship, end-of-life healthcare, public health, and genetic engineering, among other topics. We will also focus on the role of ethical theory in applied ethical questions in the medical context, and the interaction between law and medicine. This course will emphasize discussion and respectful argumentation. Assessment will consist of two short papers of 5-10pgs each, an in-class presentation, and participation. There will be no exams.

Office Hours: After class or by appointment.

Meetings: Students will be expected to have carefully read the assigned readings **prior** to class time. Discussion is vital for successful learning in this course and students will be expected to participate. I will also call on students to answer specific questions.

Readings:

1) *Classic Cases in Medical Ethics* (Gregory Pence, 4th edition)

ISBN: 978-0072829358

2) *Everybody Wants to Go to Heaven but Nobody Wants to Die: Bioethics and the Transformation of Health Care in America* (Amy Gutmann and Jonathan

Moreno) ISBN: 978-0871404466

All other readings will be made available via Sakai.

Assessment

Presentation (25% of grade): Students will be responsible for presenting once during the semester. This will not involve leading the class but will instead be a matter of giving brief summaries of the readings themselves as well as additional information and evaluation of the arguments involved. Presenting students will be called on frequently to answer questions and evaluate the text.

Short Papers (25% of grade each): There will be two short papers due later in the semester via the Assignments tab in Sakai, in Word doc format, the first on Oct. 16th and the second by Dec. 13th, both by 11:59pm. These papers should be 5-10 pages double spaced, with Times New Roman 12-point font and 1-inch margins. These should (1) explain and (2) defend or criticize a significant argument from one of the texts that we have read. Only the first page or so should be devoted to an explanation of the topic. In

Note: This syllabus may be revised in the course of the semester.

the remaining part of the paper students should write persuasively and make an argument in favor of a particular position on their topic. This should also include consideration and responses to possible criticisms of your argument. Longer is not necessarily better, but instead strength of explanation and argumentative clarity will be the main points of evaluation. The grading rubric I use is roughly 20% clarity of writing, 40% submitting all required elements of the essay, 40% quality of the arguments provided.

Participation (25% of grade): Students must participate in classroom discussions but need not participate each day. Grading will not be based on the number of times a student speaks but instead on general willingness to be involved in the conversations that take place. Attendance is required as a part of your participation grade. Students should be on time and have already read the readings for that day.

Policies

Late work policy: Requests for an extension must be made with at least one day's notice before the due date and will be granted at instructor discretion. Late work will be accepted up to 2 days after the due date, with a half letter grade penalty.

Electronics policy: Discussion is vital to the success of this course. For this reason, students may not use any electronic devices during class unless 1) a request for an accommodation is made, for which documentation should be provided, or 2) an individual student makes a convincing argument for an exception for a particular type of device usage in their case.

Accommodations: Any student with a disability or special learning requirement impacting their participation in the course should discuss this with me in the first week of class so that reasonable accommodations can be made.

Schedule

Section One: Medicalization and the Nature of Disease

Wed 8/31: Course introduction; what is medical ethics?

Fri 9/2: *The Medicalization of Society*, Ch.2 (Conrad)

Wed 9/7: *The Medicalization of Society*, Ch.8 (Conrad)

*Recommended: "Rethinking 'Disease'" (Powell and Scarffe)

Section Two: Informed Consent and the Doctor-Patient Relationship

Fri 9/9: "Should Doctors Tell the Truth?" (Collins) + "A Terrifying Truth" (Dresser)

Wed 9/14: “Personal Sovereignty and its Boundaries” (Feinberg) + “Criteria for Involuntary Commitment in NC”

Fri 9/16: “Concept of Capacity” (Kim) + “Autonomy and Surrogate Decision Making” (Macauley) p.59-67

Wed 9/21: “The Doctor-Patient Relationship in Different Cultures” (Ruth Macklin)

*Recommended: “Competence in Anorexia Nervosa” (Tan)

Section Three: End-of-Life Ethics

Fri 9/23: *Everybody Wants to Go to Heaven*, Ch.4, “Uneasy Deaths”

Wed 9/28: *Classic Cases*, Ch.2 “Comas: Karen Quinlan and Nancy Cruzan” p.29-44, 53bottom-55top

Fri 9/30: “Active and Passive Euthanasia” (Rachels)

Wed 10/5: “The Unexamined Benefits of the Expansive Legalization of Medical Assistance-in-Dying” (Sarbey and Riley)

Fri 10/7: “The Note” (Hill) + *Washington v. Glucksberg*

Wed 10/12: *Classic Cases*, Ch. 9 “Letting Impaired Newborns Die” (Pence) p.216-231, 241-242

*Recommended: “Assisted Suicide: The Philosophers’ Brief” (Dworkin et al)

Section Four: Contested Surgeries

Fri 10/14: “Amputees by Choice” (Elliott)

Short paper 1 due by 11:59pm 10/16

Wed 10/19: “Beauty Under the Knife: A Feminist Appraisal of Cosmetic Surgery” (Tong and Lindemann)

Fri 10/21: “A Defense of Cosmetic Surgery” (Coleman)

Wed 10/26: “The Ethics of Circumcision” (Earp)

*Recommended: “Deafness, Culture and Choice” (Levy)

Section Five: Research Ethics

Fri 10/28: “Scientific Research is a Moral Duty” (Harris)

Wed 11/2: *Classic Cases*, “The Tuskegee Study” p.276-294

Fri 11/4: “Belmont Report” + “Common Rule” (skim).

*Recommended: *Everybody Wants to Go to Heaven* Ch.7 “Human Experiments”

Section Six: Public Health Ethics

Wed 11/9: *Everybody Wants to Go to Heaven*, Ch.6 “Foraging for Ethics”

Fri 11/11: “Who Should Live When Not All Can?” (Pence)

Wed 11/16: “Financial Penalties for the Unhealthy?” (Pearson and Lieber)

Fri 11/18: “Privatization and Just Health Care” (Buchanan)

Wed 11/23: Thanksgiving break. No class

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*Recommended: “Who Should Receive Life Support During a Public Health Emergency?” (White)

Section Seven: Genetic Engineering

Wed 11/30: *Everybody Wants to Go to Heaven*, Ch.9 “Opening Cell Doors”

Fri 12/2: “Human Enhancement Ethics” (Bostrom and Savulescu)

Wed 12/7: “Compulsory Moral Bioenhancement Should be Covert” (Crutchfield)

Fri 12/9: “In Defense of Posthuman Dignity” (Bostrom)

*Recommended: “The Non-Identity Problem and Genetic Harms: The Case of Wrongful Handicaps” (Brock)

Short paper 2 due by 11:59pm 12/13